

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ARA-16 EUR-25 AF-10 NEA-14 RSC-01 ISO-00 IO-14

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PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 OMB-01 AID-20 EB-11 CU-05 COME-00

AGR-20 TRSE-00 FRB-03 FEA-02 DRC-01 ACDA-19 /236 W

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P R 201145Z AUG 74

FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7389

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY LONDON

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7/13 AF
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III MAF
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CTG SEVEN NINE PT FOUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 PHNOM PENH 11092

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PINS, PFOR, MOPS, ECON, CB
SUBJECT: KHMER REPORT -- AUGUST 20,1974

GENERAL

1. THE GKR CELEBRATED KHMER ARMED FORCES DAY ON AUGUST 15 IN ROUSING FASHION WITH AN IMPRESSIVE MILITARY PARADE AND A BRIEF ADDRESS BY PRESIDENT LON NOL IN WHICH HE EXPRESSED GRATITUDE FOR THE SACRIFICES OF THE MILITARY AND REITERATED THE GKR JULY 9 OFFER FOR UNCONDITIONAL NEGOTIATIONS, THE KC LAUNCHED OVER 30 ROCKETS AT PHNOM PENH WHICH FELL FAR SHORT TO THE SOUTH AND FAILED TO DISRUPT THE FESTIVITIES. PRIME MINISTER LONG BORET ARRIVED BACK IN PHNOM PENH IN TIME FOR THE CEREMONY, AFTER CARRYING OUT PRODUCTIVE DISCUSSIONS IN JAKARTA, MANILA AND BANGKOK ON STRATEGY TO BE EMPLOYED TO RETAIN THE GKR SEAT AT THE UNGA SESSION THIS FALL. MILITARY ACTIVITY WAS CONCENTRATED IN AREAS CLOSE TO PHNOM PENH AS KC AND FANK 2ND DIVISION FORCES CLASHED IN THE BASSAC REGION, A FRIENDLY OUTPOST WAS OVERRUN WITH 35 OF ITS 50 DEFENDERS NOW LISTED AS MISSING, WHILE FANK SCORED A GOOD VICTORY ON ROUTE 61. ENEMY PRESSURE IN BATTAMBANG PROVINCE AND ALONG ROUTE 4 CONTINUED, WHILE THE KHMER AIR FORCE LAUNCHED AN IMPRESSIVE NUMBER
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OF SORTIES NEAR SIEM REAP. ON THE ECONOMIC FRONT, MOST PHNOM PENH FOOD PRICES INCREASED SUBSTANTIALY DURING THE WEEK. GRUNK/FUNK PROPAGANDA CONTINUED TO VENT ITS SPLEEN AGAINST FORMER PRESIDENT NIXON AND TO MAKE DIRE PREDICTIONS ABOUT PRESIDENT FORD'S PROSPECTS.

POLITICAL (INTERNAL)

2. THE AUGUST 15 KHMER "ARMED FORCES DAY" CEREMONIES WENT OFF SUCCESSFULLY AND WITHOUT DISRUPTION DESPITE KC ROCKETS DURING THE DAY (SEE MILITARY SECTION). THE HOLIDAY WAS IN COMMEMORATION OF THE FIRST YEAR OF SUCCESSFUL FANK DEFENSE EFFORTS WITHOUT THE ASSISTANCE OF THE U.S. AIR FORCE, AND THE GKR WENT "ALL OUT." THE HIGHLIGHT WAS A MASSIVE PARADE AT WHICH PRESIDENT LON NOL SPOKE BRIEFLY, EXPRESSING THE NATION'S GRATITUDE TO ITS SOLDIERS AND REITERATING THE GKR JULY 9 OFFER FOR UNCONDITIONAL NEGOTIATIONS. THE PARADE WAS WELL ORGANIZED AND INCLUDED IMPRESSIVE DISPLAYS BY ALL ARMS OF THE MILITARY. COMMENT: THE PARADE SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN WELL RECEIVED, BOTH BY KHMER AND THE RESIDENT FOREIGN PRESS. IT SERVED THE DUAL PURPOSE OF BOOSTING MORALE OF THE SOLDIERS AND DEMONSTRATING THE MARKED INCREASE IN CONFIDENCE IN PHNOM PENH AS COMPARED WITH A YEAR AGO. END COMMENT.

3. THERE HAS BEEN CONSIDERABLE LOCAL AND GOVERNMENT PRESS ATTENTION IN RECENT DAYS TO AN ALLEGEDLY SPONTANEOUS "OPEN LETTER" FROM NINE KHMER INTELLECTUALS AND CIVIL SERVANTS TO THEIR FORMER KOMPONG CHAM CLASSMATES NOTABLY KHIEU SAMPHAN, SALOTH SAR, AND HOU NIM. THE LETTER APPEALS TO THE KC LEADERS TO "FORGET THE PAST" AND TRY TO FIND A WAY TO ENTER INTO NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE GKR. THE AUTHORS OF THE LETTERS ALSO OFFER TO SERVE AS INTERMEDIARIES. THE LOCAL PRIVATE PRESS, NOTING THE REPRINTING OF THE LETTER IN THE OFFICIAL GKR DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN AS WELL AS LONG BORET'S REFERENCES TO KHIEU SAMPHAN ON HIS RECENT TRIP, COMMENTS THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS NOW IMPLICITLY CONCEDED THE FACT KHIEU SAMPHAN IS NOT A "GHOST". THE COMMENTARY ALSO HARKS BACK TO KHIEU SAMPHAN'S REPUTATION AS A MAN OF THE PEOPLE IN HOPING THAT HE WILL NOW DISPLAY A

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SIMILAR COMPASSION FOR THEM SO THE WAR MAY END. COMMENT: SUCH GKR INSPIRED OR CONDONED PUBLICITY ON KHIEU SAMPHAN AND THE OTHER "IN-COUNTRY" LEADERS IS NOT ONLY A DIG AT SIHANOUK BUT REPRESENTS THE CONTINUING SOMEWHAT NAIVE FEELING OF MANY GKR LEADERS THAT LEFT TO THEIR OWN DEVICES THEY CAN COME TO TERMS WITH THEIR KHMER OPPONENTS, WHO MAY BE SEEN MORE AS TRUE NATIONALISTS THAN DEDICATED COMMUNISTS.

4. PRESIDENT LON NOL ON AUGUST 15 PARDONED AN EDUCATION MINISTRY OFFICIAL, OUL CHAND, WHO HAD BEEN ARRESTED ON

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MAY 21 ON SUSPICION OF SUBVERSION. HIS COLLEAGUE, YI YON, ARRESTED AT THE SAME TIME, HAD PREVIOUSLY BENEFITTED FROM A SIMILAR ACT OF CLEMENCY BY THE MARSHAL (SEE JULY 16 KHMER REPORT). COMMENT: THE CONTINUING REASONABLE POSTURE OF THE GKR TOWARD STUDENTS AND TEACHERS PLUS THEIR CURRENT PREOCCUPATION WITH EXAMINATIONS FOR THE MOMENT CONTINUE TO KEEP THE STUDENT/TEACHER PROTEST MOVEMENT AT A LOW EBB.

POLITICAL (EXTERNAL)

5. PRIME MINISTER LONG BORET RETURNED TO PHNOM PENH ON AUGUST 15 FROM HIS TRIP TO JAKARTA, MANILA AND BANGKOK (SEE LAST WEEK'S KHMER REPORT). THE VISITS WENT WELL AND THE PRIME MINISTER WAS PLEASED WITH THE DISCUSSIONS HE HAD IN THE THREE ASEAN CAPITALS, PARTICULARLY HIS CONSULTATIONS WITH INDONESIAN FOREIGN MINISTER MALIK IN JAKARTA. COMMENT: ONE OF THE PRINCIPAL REASONS FOR THE LONG BORET TRIP WAS TO DISCUSS POSSIBLE STRATEGIES FOR THE KHMER CREDENTIALS BATTLE IN THE 29TH UNGA SESSION. THE GKR IS WELL AWARE THAT A SIMPLE REPETITION OF LAST YEAR'S STRATEGY TO DEFER THIS ISSUE IS NOT LIKELY TO BE SUCCESSFUL AGAIN. THUS, THE OPPORTUNITY FOR BORET TO EXCHANGE IDEAS WITH SOME KEY SUPPORTERS OF THE GKR CAUSE WAS VERY TIMELY. END COMMENT.
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6. FOREIGN MINISTER KEUKY LIM WAS DISCUSSING THE SAME ISSUE AS HE CONTINUED HIS TRAVELS IN AFRICA. HE VISITED THE IVORY COAST DURING THE WEEK, AND WAS SCHEDULED TO DEPART FOR LIBERIA ON AUGUST 18.

7. THE ASEAN DEPUTY SECRETARY-GENERALS' MEETING WILL TAKE PLACE IN KUALA LUMPUR AUGUST 20-21. EMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR REPORTS THAT THE CAMBODIAN QUESTION IS ON THE AGENDA FOR THE MEETING.

GRUNK/FUNK

8. FUNK PROPAGANDA CONTINUED ITS STREAM OF INVECTIVE AGAINST FORMER PRESIDENT NIXON ACCUSING HIM OF "MON-STROUS, GENOCIDAL CRIMES" AGAINST THE CAMBODIAN PEOPLE. THE BROADCAST WENT ON TO CLAIM THAT "R. NIXON AND HIS LACKEYS", I.E. LON NOL AND COMPANY, "ARE LIKE MANGY DOGS HATED BY EVERYONE" AND PREDICTED THAT IF PRESIDENT FORD FOLLOWS IN HIS PREDECESSOR'S FOOTSTEPS, "HE TOO WILL BE HANGED BY THE AMERICAN PEOPLE AND THE PEOPLES OF THE WORLD".

9. ENEMY PROPAGANDA HAS THUS FAR TREATED THE SUCCESSFUL AUGUST 15 KHMER ARMED FORCES DAY SOMEWHAT GINGERLY, CONTENTING ITSELF WITH THE INACCURATE CHARGE THAT ITS FORCES FIRED NEARLY 50 ROCKETS INTO SOUTHERN PHNOM PENH AND CHAMCAR MON. THE BROADCAST ALLEGED THAT THESE SHELLINGS THREW "LON NOL AND HIS ACOLYTES" INTO GREAT FEAR AS THEY ATTEMPTED TO "CELEBRATE THEIR PITIFUL ARMY DAY".

10. SIHANOUK CONTINUED TO REBUT FROM PEKING LONG BORET'S RECENT COMMENTS ABOUT NEOGIATIONS (SEE LAST WEEK'S KHMER REPORT). SPEAKING TO AFP, THE PRINCE REASSERTED HIS STATUS AS THE LEGITIMATE CAMBODIAN HEAD OF STATE, REAFFIRMED THE UNITY OF THE "ENTIRE INTERNAL RESISTANCE", ON THIS ISSUE AS WELL AS NEGOTIATIONS, AND REJECTED LONG BORET'S CLAIMS OF GKR POPULATION CONTROL. IN LESS DRAMATIC ACTIONS, SIHANOUK DURING THE WEEK SENT MESSAGES OF CONGRATULATIONS ON THEIR NATIONAL DAYS TO

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THE PRESIDENTS OF THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC, GABON AND THE CONGO.

ECONOMIC

11. AS OF AUGUST 18, GOVERNMENT RICE STOCKS IN PHNOM PENH AMOUNTED TO 45,426 M/T OR A 59-DAY SUPPLY. NO RICE WAS SHIPPED LAST WEEK FROM THE BATTAMBANG AREA VIA ROUTE 5 AND THE TONLE SAP RIVER BECAUSE A BRIDGE SOUTH OF BATTAMBANG WAS TEMPORARILY DAMAGED BY ENEMY ACTION. ONE MEKONG CONVOY ARRIVED IN PHNOM PENH DURING THE WEEK WITH 2,000 TONS OF RICE.

12. RICE PRICES WERE UNCHANGED, BUT FOR MOST OTHER MAJOR RETAIL GOODS SOLD IN PHNOM PENH MARKETS, PRICES INCREASED SUBSTANTIALLY DURING THE WEEK. FRESH WATER FISH ROSE 30 PERCENT; BANANAS 27 PERCENT; CUCUMBER, CAULIFLOWE AND CABBAGE 50 PERCENT; MIL 15 PERCENT AND CHARCOAL 13 PER CENT. THE GENERALLY UPWARD TREND IS ATTRIBUTABLE TO SEASONAL FACTORS AND TO THE DESTRUCTION OF THE ABOVE-MENTIONED BRIDGE, WHICH INTERRUPTED THE FLOW OF GOODS TO PHNOM PENH THROUGH THE RIVER CONVOY SYSTEM FOR ABOUT TEN DAYS. THE BLACK MARKET EXCHANGE RATE REMAINED AT 1,050 RIELS PER DOLLAR DURING THE WEEK.

13. THE DAILY GASOLINE QUOTA FOR ALL PHNOM PENH HAS NOW BEEN REDUCED FROM 40 TO 35 CUBIC METERS PER DAY.

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AMEMBASSY TOKYO
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AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
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AS A CONSEQUENCE, RATION LEVELS FOR PRIVATELY-
OWNED PASSENGER VEHICLES HAVE BEEN REDUCED FROM 6 TO
3 LITERS PER WEEK, AND FOR MOTORBIKES FROM 2 LITERS
TO 1 LITER PER WEEK.

MILITARY

14. MOST SIGNIFICANT ACTIVITY DURING THE WEEK TOOK
PLACE NEAR PHNOM PENH. ON AUGUST 15, THE KC FIRED
36 107MM ROCKETS FROM THE BASSAC TOWARD PHNOM PENH,
BUT ALL LANDED SOUTH OF THE CAPITAL OR IN ITS SOUTHERN-
MOST REGIONS. THE CASUALTIES WERE RELATIVELY LIGHT,
6 KILLED AND 40 WOUNDED, AND THERE WAS NO DISRUPTIVE
EFFECT ON THE KHMER ARMED FORCES DAY CELEBRATIONS.
ENEMY ATTACKES IN THE BASSAC REGION HAD THAT SAME DAY
FORCED FANK 2ND DIVISION ELEMENTS TO WITHDRAW SEVERAL

HUNDRED METERS, BUT THEY DID MANAGE TO PREVENT CLOSER PENETRATION TO THE CAPITAL AND BY WEEK'S END HAD STABILIZED THEIR DEFENSE AND WERE COUNTER-ATTACKING. ON AUGUST 13, A COMMUNIST ATTACK AGAINST A GOVERNMENT OUTPOST 20 KILOMETERS NORTHWEST OF PHNOM PENH FORCED THE DEFENDERS TO ABANDON THE POSITION. ALTHOUGH A FANK COUNTER-ATTACK SUBSEQUENTLY RETOOK THE POSITION, 35 SOLDIERS WERE LISTED AS MISSING AND AN EQUIVALENT NUMBER OF WEAPONS LOST. FANK, HOWEVER, GOT IN ITS
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LICKS ALONG ROUTE 61 NORTHEAST OF PHNOM PENH WHEN, ON AUGUST 19, IT CAME INTO CONTACT WITH A KC FORCE, KILLED 41 ENEMY SOLDIERS AND CAPTURED OVER 20 WEAPONS WITH ONLY LIGHT FRIENDLY LOSSES.

15. IN SOUTHWESTERN CAMBODIA, THE KC STEPPED UP THEIR ACTIVITIES AGAINST UNITS LOCATED ALONG ROUTE 4 WEST OF KOMPONG SPEU. ARTILLERY AND MORTAR ATTACKS AGAINST THE BESIEGED GARRISON OF KOMPONG SEILA ALSO INCREASE IN INTENSITY, ALTHOUGH UNITS STATIONED THERE DID MOUNT OPERATIONS AIMED AT EXPANDING THE DEFENSIVE PERIMETER.

16. TO THE NORTH, COMMUNIST FORCES CONTINUED THEIR ATTACKS AGAINST SMALL OUTPOSTS IN BATTAMBANG PROVINCE, PARTICULARLY KOH KRALOR, 30 KILOMETERS SOUTH OF BATTAMBANG CITY. ON AUGUST 19, THE KHMER AIR FORCE, IN AN IMPRESSIVE PERFORMANCE, DIRECTED OVER SEVENTH T-28 AND OTHER SORTIES AGAINST KC BASE AND LOGISTICS AREAS LOCATED NORTH OF SIEM REAP. THREE SECONDARY EXPLOSIONS WERE OBSERVED AND FANK HAS ALSO REPORTED DESTRUCTION OF VARIOUS STRUCTURES INCLUDING A WATER DIVERSION PROJECT.

17. THERE WAS VERY LITTLE ACTIVITY ELSEWHERE IN THE COUNTRY. A MEKONG CONVOY ARRIVED IN PHNOM PENH AUGUST 19, DELAYED SOMEWHAT BY HIGH WATERS. THE CONVOY RECEIVED TWO ATTACKS BY FIRE EN ROUTE, BUT THERE WERE NO HITS.
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